



Department Description

The Fire-Rescue Department protects the life and property of San Diego residents and visitors through a variety of safety services. Serving an area of approximately 331 square miles, with a resident population of 1.3 million, Fire-Rescue includes 47 fire stations, a communications center, apparatus and equipment repair facilities, a training facility, nine permanent lifeguard stations, and 27 seasonal lifeguard towers.

The major activities performed by the Fire-Rescue Department include: fire suppression, emergency medical transport, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, fire investigation, explosives disarmament, fire safety inspection and education programs, equipment and facilities maintenance, waterway and swimmer safety, and the operation of the fire communications center.

The Department's mission is:

To serve the community of San Diego by providing the highest level of emergency/rescue services, hazard prevention and safety education ensuring the protection of life, property and the environment

Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives represent the action plan for the Department.

Goal 1: Maintain the resources necessary for rapid response in emergency situations

Essential to the effective delivery of the many fire-rescue, emergency medical, and lifeguard services demanded by the community are the abilities to quickly and efficiently process requests for service, identify the appropriate response units, notify them of the need to respond, and ensure their delivery to the emergency scene in time to provide the maximum benefit possible. This requires that performance measures be developed and continually monitored to ensure national response time goals are met and the anticipated beneficial outcomes of a rapid response are achieved. In addition, with respect to the prevention of fires and the mitigation of their severity, it is also essential that the inspection of target hazard occupancies and brush management parcels be conducted frequently to identify and correct fire code violations. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Quickly and safely respond to all emergencies in San Diego
- Put the right resources in the right place at the right time in order to save lives, property, and preserve the environment

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- Provide fire prevention services and other support in order to ensure the continued safe and effective delivery of fire and rescue services

Goal 2: Ensure effective leadership for the efficient provision of fire-rescue services

To provide effective emergency service delivery, it is imperative that the number and type of resources necessary to provide that service be identified, procured, maintained, and replaced as needed. This requires a constant monitoring of service demand levels and the Department's ability to effectively and efficiently meet those demands. A vigorous and ongoing program of needs assessment, development and communication of budgetary priorities, and fiscally sound practices to manage all resources allocated to the Department must be provided by the Fire Chief and the Department's leadership team. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objective.

- Identify needs and revenue sources to obtain and manage the necessary funding in order to responsibly maintain the Department and grow in a way that is consistent with current and projected demands for service

Goal 3: Provide exceptional customer service

It is widely recognized that the Fire-Rescue Department exists as an organization for the sole purpose of delivering exceptional emergency and non-emergency services to our community. Absent this mission and focus, there would be no justification for the expense associated with Department operations. In order to meet customer service expectations, it is essential that service needs be identified, programs be developed to meet these needs, and monitoring of performance be conducted. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objective.

- Exceed customer expectations in all we do by treating each customer transaction with responsiveness, competency, and respect

Goal 4: Develop and maintain a skilled fire-rescue workforce

As with any organization, the Fire-Rescue Department's success relies heavily upon the development and maintenance of a highly skilled and dedicated workforce. To ensure the ability to accurately identify the needs and provide exceptional service to all segments of our diverse community, our workforce must reflect the makeup of the community as a whole. Moreover, once employees join our workforce, they must be provided adequate training and health and safety programs to ensure their competency and availability for assignment. The Department will move toward accomplishing this goal by focusing on the following objectives.

- Provide a comprehensive safety services program for employees in order to reduce the incidence and severity of occupational injury and illness, reduce cost to tax payers, and maintain mission readiness
- Recruit and retain a workforce that is qualified and mirrors the diversity of the community we serve

Service Efforts and Accomplishments

The most significant accomplishment of the Fire-Rescue Department was a dramatically improved response to the 2007 Firestorm as compared to its performance during the very similar 2003 Cedar Fire. Regrettably, while both firestorm events resulted in the loss of over 300 homes, it was estimated that the effective response of Fire-Rescue during the 2007 Firestorm saved over 6,000 homes from damage or destruction. More importantly, highly coordinated efforts with the Police Department resulted in the safe evacuation of over 200,000 City residents in the path of fire. As a result of these efforts, no resident or safety response personnel lives were lost due to this widespread natural disaster. Lessons learned and adjustments made following the Cedar fire enabled this improved response. Lessons learned during the 2007 Firestorm have also been identified and recommendations for additional improvement will be implemented by the Department through its tactical plan.

A less visible, but highly significant accomplishment was progress made to replace the Department's aging fleet of emergency response apparatus that was made possible by a 66% increase in equipment funding over the past two years. Eight new fire engines were placed into service this year. In addition, there are nine new engines and five trucks currently being outfitted or pending delivery. This includes a new bomb squad response apparatus that replaces one that is 20 years old, two water tenders to provide a water supply in areas where no fire hydrants exist or service has been disrupted, and a foam tender that replaces an apparatus based on a 1958 chassis. The Department

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was also awarded a Fire Act Grant requiring a City match to purchase a Heavy Rescue apparatus for use in rescue operations in all-risk disaster events. Lastly, the construction of the Pacific Highlands Fire Station which entered service in February 2008, will address inadequate response times currently experienced by the adjacent communities.

Fire-Rescue also completed its Business Process Reengineering (BPR) study this year. This comprehensive review of 19 areas of Department operations resulted in the development of 69 recommendations for efficiency and effectiveness improvements. Many of these recommendations will be implemented within the existing budget or at relatively modest cost. As part of its BPR, the Department also developed its tactical plan and performance measures. These documents will enable the Department to focus its efforts on key activities, more effectively plan to accomplish critical projects, gauge the effectiveness of its efforts, and make adjustments necessary to realize the goals and objectives it has established.

Budget Dollars at Work: Performance Expectations

Goal 1: Maintain the resources necessary for rapid response in emergency situations

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Percent of initial unit emergency response arrival within NFPA 1710 guideline of 5 minutes or less (by fire station district)	52%	51.9%	57% ¹
2. Percent of effective fire force emergency response arrival within NFPA 1710 guideline of 9 minutes or less (by fire station district)	70%	67.4%	75% ²
3. Percent of 911 calls answered in 10 seconds or less after transfer to Fire/EMS dispatch	93%	75.5% ³	90% ⁴
4. Percent of emergency calls processed within 1 minute	6%	20.9%	90% ⁵
5. Percent of structure fires confined to area or room of origin	41%	9% ⁶ (excludes Witch Fire)	41%
6. Number of fire deaths per 100,000 population	0	0	0
7. Number of fire injuries per 100,000 population	2.2	1.2	0
8. Structure fire loss on vegetation fires when fire-rescue helicopter is on initial response	\$208,000	\$10,156 (excludes Witch Fire)	<\$200,000
9. Percent of time HazMat unit responds within 60 minute timeframe established by the Joint Powers Authority	100%	98.3%	90%
10. Percent of incidents where spontaneous return of patient circulation is achieved when first responders arrive within NFPA 1710 guidelines	18%	19.3%	23%

¹ National Fire Protection Association 1710 guideline is 5 minutes (1 min. for notification and 4 min. travel time) or less 90% of the time. Target reflects interim goal.

² National Fire Protection Association 1710 guideline is 9 minutes (1 min. for notification and 8 min. travel time) or less 90% of the time. Target reflects interim goal.

³ Fire/Rescue will be running further reports to break down statistics by individual call takers to see if the problem is isolated to certain call takers or if it is a wide spread issue.

⁴ National standard is 10 seconds or less 90 percent of the time.

⁵ National Fire Protection Association 1710 guideline is 1 minute or less 90 percent of the time. Notification of responding ambulance unit prior to call triage completion was reinstated on January 1, 2008 and will result in a significant improvement in 1 minute call processing percentage in Fiscal Year 2009.

⁶ Low value is thought to result from a combination of data entry inconsistencies, delayed emergency reporting and increasing response times. Additional training will be provided on data entry criteria.

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Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
11. Percent EMS response time complies with City-wide standards (by service area)	90%	91%	90%
12. Ratio of drownings to beach attendance at guarded beaches (U.S. Lifeguard Association standard is 1 for every 18 million)	1:24M	1:21M	1:24M
13. Percent of annual fire inspections completed within 90 days of due date	NA	74%	90%
14. Percent of privately owned parcels subject to brush management regulation inspected for compliance annually.	0%	16%	50%

Goal 2: Ensure effective leadership for the efficient provision of fire-rescue services

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Cost/Loss Index (budget per capita + fire loss per capita)	\$185	\$170 (excludes Witch Fire)	\$190

Goal 3: Provide exceptional customer service

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Customer satisfaction index using City Surveys	4.95	4.9	4.5 ⁷
2. EMS customer satisfaction survey results	4	4.5	4+ ⁸
3. Percent of customer service events attended when attendance is requested	97%	97%	95%

Goal 4: Develop and maintain a skilled fire-rescue workforce

Performance Measure	Baseline FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
1. Percent of active Operations personnel completing priority training	N/A	100%	100%
2. Reportable injury/illness incident rate per 100 full-time employees	11	9.8 ⁹	10
3. Percent of emergency vehicle responses that are accident-free	99.98%	99.99%	100%

Budget Dollars at Work: Sizing and Workload Data

	Actual FY2005	Actual FY2006	Actual FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
Sizing Data					
Number of firefighters	888	902	916	940	955
Number of firefighters per 100,000 population ¹⁰	68	69	69	71	71
Number of lifeguards (total permanent and hourly personnel expressed as a fulltime equivalent - FTE)	125	125	125	125	125

⁷ Based on scale of 1 to 5 with 5 indicating the highest satisfaction rating.

⁸ Based on scale of 1 to 5 with 5 indicating excellent service.

⁹ Data through 3rd Quarter of Fiscal Year 2008.

¹⁰ Population of the City of San Diego and source: 1.3 million SANDAG (2007 data).

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	Actual FY2005	Actual FY2006	Actual FY2007	Actual FY2008	Target FY2009
Number of lifeguards per 100,000 beach visitors at guarded beaches ¹¹	.54	.59	.59	.59	.59
Percent of fire station response districts compliant with NFPA guideline of 9 square miles or less	N/A	73%	73%	75%	75%
Number of front line fire engines	45	45	46	47	47
Number of reserve fire engines ¹²	14	14	18	21	22
Number of front line trucks	12	12	12	12	13
Number of reserve trucks ¹²	5	5	5	7	6
Percent of fire apparatus within 15 year service life	N/A	62%	53%	74%	75%
Number of front line lifeguard vessels (includes inboards, outboards and Personal Water Crafts)	20	20	20	20	20
Number of lifeguard vehicles	33	33	33	35	35
Workload Data					
Number of fire calls	3,401	3,579	3,349	4,428	3,580
Number of medical responses	79,853	84,882	87,789	91,872	93,860
Number of medical transports	60,968	64,916	67,959	70,810	74,000
Number of preventative acts on the beaches/ocean	186,606	160,978	250,769	219,912	200,000
Number of medical aid responses by lifeguards	3,594	3,207	3,194	3,357	3,200
Number of boat rescues/interventions	409	359	390	395	400

¹¹Based on average attendance by month: San Diego Lifeguard-Monthly Statistics

¹² Reserve fire engines and trucks are provided to allow for replacement of front line fire engines and trucks temporarily unavailable due to maintenance, deployment on strike teams, or during large scale emergencies. While the City has consistently had reserve fire engines and trucks, these apparatus have not been consistently operational and available for service. At the time Fleet Services was consolidated (July 1, 2007), only one reserve Type 1 fire engine was available. When the wild fires broke out on October 21, 2007, all 20 reserve Type 1 fire engines were available. Other emergency vehicles had similar levels of readiness.